



Alaska Workforce Investment Newsletter

In This Issue

- AWIB Update
- CTE Month in Alaska
- CTE: A New Brand
- APS Communications
- Why Should Alaskans Care About Early Educators' Wages?
- Marketing and the Disability Employment Initiative
- Best Beginnings: Building a Strong Workforce from the Ground Up
- Alaska CTE: Educator Innovation and Student Determination
- WorkKeys Testing: Perceptions of Alaska High School Students

Important Dates

March 9-13

[NAWB Forum in Washington, D.C.](#)

April 19-20

[REAP Conference in Anchorage](#)

May 9-10

AWIB Meeting in Southcentral AK

Websites of Interest

[Apprenticeship](#)

[AVTEC](#)

[AWIB](#)

[AWIB CTE](#)

[DOLWD](#)

[EED CTE](#)

[UA Workforce Programs](#)

Dear Reader,

In this issue we have the following articles: Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) Update; CTE Month in Alaska; CTE A New Brand; APS Communications; Why Should Alaskans Care About Early Educators' Wages?; Marketing and the Disability Employment Initiative; Best Beginnings: Building a Strong Workforce From the Ground Up; Alaska CTE: Educator Innovation and Student Determination; and WorkKeys Testing: Perceptions of Alaska High School Students.

The AWIB has developed this newsletter to connect schools, industry, and stakeholders with the AWIB and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. We are publishing every other month and featuring opportunities, programs and information about State of Alaska initiatives aimed at helping youth and adults find meaningful employment and postsecondary training. Also, the newsletter will have articles from the Department of Education and Early Development related to Career and Technical Education.

Please let me know if you have ideas for future articles. The next newsletter will be published in April 2012.



Sincerely,

Jeff Selvey

AWIB Executive Director

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Executive Director's Report

C. Jeff Selvey, AWIB Executive Director

The AWIB meeting was held in the Treadwell Room at the Baranof Westmark Hotel, in Juneau on February 22 and 23. The agenda included a welcome and update by Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner Click Bishop on the Governor's Workforce Priorities, an overall board update by Chair Jim Lynch, and also updates from me on Career and Technical Education, Alaska State Energy Sector Partnership, and Film/TV grants.

The board awarded Alaska Secondary and Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Teachers and/or Administrators of the year:

- **Secondary Instructor of the Year – Gary Hall – Delta High School**
- **Postsecondary Instructor of the Year – John Plutt - Local 375 Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC)**
- **Secondary Administrator of the Year – Rick Rios – Anchorage School District**

For more information go online: ["AWIB Recognizes Hall, Plutt, Rios for Contributions to Career and Technical Education"](#).

Northrim Bank Economist Mark Edwards presented "Alaska's Economic Outlook." This was followed with a spirited discussion with Director of Administrative Services Brynn Keith and Deputy Commissioner David Stone, Labor and Workforce Development.

Department reports presented on day one:

- Budget update, Brynn Keith, Director of Administrative Services
- Grants and Five Year Plan - Corinne Geldhof, Director of Division of Business Partnerships and Mike Shiffer, Assistant Director of Division of Business Partnerships
- Legislative update on current bills involving AWIB, Paula Scavera, Special Assistant to the Commissioner

Department reports presented on day two:

- Employment Security Division (ESD)/Job Centers, Paul Dick, ESD Director and James Harvey, ESD Assistant Director
- The Untapped Talent Pool available through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Cheryl Walsh, DVR Director

The University of Alaska Workforce Development Report was presented by Fred Villa, University of Alaska Associate Vice-President of Academic Affairs for Workforce Programs and Dr. Rick Caulfield, University of Alaska Southeast Provost.

AWIB Gasline Administrator Gerry Andrews gave an overview of the Oil Gas Training Plan update process. The board issued a directive to proceed with the name change and update of Oil and Gas training plan.

A reception was hosted by [Alaska Mental Health Trust Fund](#), which was presented Delissa Culpepper.

The next AWIB meeting will be in South Central, Alaska on May 9 and 10, 2012.

CTE Month in Alaska

Marcia Olson, DEED Education Specialist



In conjunction with national CTE month and as designated by ACTE (Association for Career and Technical Education), Governor Sean Parnell has proclaimed February CTE Month in Alaska.

We invite you to celebrate CTE programs in Alaska. The Governor's proclamation states in part that CTE Programs, "... incorporate a rigorous academic core coupled with a high-level technical curriculum to prepare students to be college and career ready, ultimately contributing to Alaska's leadership in the national and international marketplace . . .". Some programs celebrate by hosting community open-houses; inviting local and state legislators to visit; showcasing student work; writing an editorial for the local newspaper; or publicizing their successful programs and students via newsletters, media outlets, and social networks.

This year's national logo and theme remind us that the promise of CTE is **Careers Through Education**. We know what successful CTE programs can do for our youth and adults and the ultimate benefit they provide to our economy. Let's let others know what we do, too!

For a printable version of the Alaska CTE Month Proclamation, see <http://www.eed.alaska.gov/tls/cte/docs/FEB2012/2012-alaska-proclamation.pdf>.

For promotional ideas from ACTE, see <http://www.acteonline.org/ctemonth.aspx>. Happy CTE Month!

CTE: A New Brand

Greta Goto, UA Workforce Programs Projects Manager
Marcia Olson, DEED Education Specialist



Alaska is excited to support a new national initiative that provides resources for state and local level Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to provide a clear and consistent message about what CTE is and what CTE does for our youth and adults and ultimately for our economy. The CTE branding and messaging initiative was developed by the National Association of State Directors of CTE Consortium (NASDCTEc). Our state-level initiative was launched on February 2, 2012, with a presentation at the annual CTE Coordinators' and Partners' Work Session in Anchorage. Secondary and postsecondary CTE educators heard about the purpose and intent behind the CTE logos and the "Learning that Works" tagline.

It is about the promise of Career and Technical Education, which is an unrelenting commitment to:

- continually improve the relevance and value of education;
- prepare students for success in career and college by using Career Clusters™, pathways, and programs of study;
- provide a highly skilled, sustainable workforce; provide dynamic, innovative leadership; and
- serve as a strategic partner with secondary and postsecondary educators, business and industry to ensure our nation and state are globally competitive.

A host of resources come with the CTE branding and messaging program that can be used by state and local agencies. Among them are:

- Posters and brochures.
- The national and state logos.
- Talking points for use with various audiences.
- Ideas for advocacy and support of CTE aimed at educators, business/industry, policymakers, and media.
- Fact sheets, tip sheets, leave-behinds, and issue briefs.
- PowerPoint templates.
- CTE Blog sponsored by NASDCTEc.
- CTE: Making the Difference video – a powerful 2 ½ minute video that introduces the value of CTE.

These resources and others are available from the [Alaska EED CTE](http://www.alaska.edu/cte) website and from the [NASDCTEc](http://www.nasdctec.org) website. Most of the resources are available for immediate download; however, use of the logos requires that you first agree to the usage guidelines established by NASDCTEc. You may complete and submit the agreement online at <http://www.careertech.org/resources/cteuseragreement.html>.

We invite each of you to become part of this initiative and take advantage of these powerful resources for CTE outreach efforts to your key audiences. We already know that CTE is “Learning that Works for Alaska” – now let’s get the word out to everyone!

(The CTE brand logo, brand positioning theme and brand extensions are the property of NASDCTEc.)

APS Communications

Rebekah Matrosova, ACPE Outreach Manager

The Alaska Performance Scholarship presents a unique opportunity to Alaska’s high school students – an invitation to excellence that encourages students to challenge themselves in school in exchange for funding for their postsecondary education in Alaska. This year, over 900 students are using an APS award. A multi-agency effort is underway to ensure widespread awareness of the APS among current high school students statewide, allowing them to accept that invitation to excellence and take the steps necessary to qualify.



Repeated mailings are directed to high school Senior’s home addresses – this year’s seniors have already received a colorful APS postcard as well as a letter from the Governor. Even middle school students are advised to enter high school thinking about how they can qualify via the “What’s Your Story” newspaper mailed to every Alaska 7th/8th grader’s home. The APS has become a standard topic at education conferences and information packets are regularly provided to educators and organizations encouraging college and career planning. Soon, you will notice new Public Service Ads on television and radio encouraging students to follow in the footsteps of the first class of APS recipients and qualify for this award.

Resources available at APS.alaska.gov include checklists students, parents, and teachers can use to track progress towards APS eligibility. In addition, any interested party can sign up for an online meeting to hear a program overview and ask questions about the APS – webinars are offered throughout the year and are open for registration now at APS.alaska.gov.

If you would like to receive more information about the APS via mail, or schedule a custom APS webinar presentation for a special audience, please contact ACPE at 1-877-577-3367 (269-7980 in Anchorage).

Why Should Alaskans Care About Early Educators' Wages?

Stephanie Berglund, Chief Executive Officer, **thread**



Approximately 7,300 early educators make up the early care and education workforce in Alaska^[1]. This includes individuals working at licensed child care centers, licensed family child care homes and group homes, Head Start, private and public preschools, pre-kindergarten, infant learning programs and other early childhood settings.

The services provided by the early care and learning workforce makes it possible for 32,300 Alaskans to participate in the labor force. This accounts for 10% of the Alaska resident workforce and equates to annual wages of just over \$1.1 billion, an average of \$35,300 per family in additional Alaska annual income.

Early educators' wages are among the lowest in Alaska's workforce, with the average monthly wage of an individual in this field being \$1,494. This compares to \$3,886, which is the overall average monthly wage in Alaska and more than double the monthly wage of an early educator (the Department of Labor and Economic Development, 2009).

Why should Alaskans care about early educators' wages? Alaska has been rated in the bottom ten states for quality of child care. Low wages contribute to the high turnover rate for early care and education teachers in Alaska---approximately 46% (2003, Market Rate Survey). "It's a struggle for early educators wanting to advance in their field with no promise of higher salaries as they gain more education and training, which we know leads to better quality child care," said Stephanie Berglund, the CEO of **thread**, Alaska's Child Care Resource and Referral Network.

There are over 18,000 children in child care settings in Alaska. These children would fill the communities of Bethel, Dillingham, Sitka and Unalakleet, and this represents only half of the need as another 18,000 children under age 6 years old have both of their parents working. We know that teacher retention promotes attachment and quality relationships between young children and their caregivers, which is crucial to optimal brain development and learning. We know the level of training and education of a child care provider is one of the strongest indicators of quality care and positive child outcomes.

Child care and early education should be an integral part of Alaska's economic development plan. **thread** has submitted a capital budget request to fund the Alaska SEED ROOTS (Retaining Our Outstanding Teacher) Awards, a wage incentive program aimed at retaining a quality child care workforce. ROOTS Awards are based on the [Alaska System for Early Education Development](#) (SEED) and [the SEED Registry](#), a data base supporting early childhood professionals.

It is time for Alaska to move from its rank in the bottom ten states to the top ten states for quality child care. Investing in early care and learning and Alaska's early childhood workforce is an investment in the future of our state with long-term impacts through higher graduation rates, reduced crime, a stronger workforce and healthier communities. To find out more about the Alaska SEED ROOTS Awards, please contact: Panu Lucier at plucier@threadalaska.org or 907.265.3106.

Marketing and the Disability Employment Initiative

Louise Dean, AWIB Program Coordinator

State partner agencies for the Alaska Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant employed a new marketing approach targeting the general public, partner agencies, and employers. This effort was put forth to convey how various aspects of the project will create a modern job center system. Utilizing the latest programs and services will help job seekers with disabilities obtain successful employment outcomes.

The [Ticket to Work](http://jobs.alaska.gov/t2w/) (hyperlink to <http://jobs.alaska.gov/t2w/>) website and the DEI webpage (hyperlink to <http://labor.alaska.gov/awib/dei.htm>) are now available to the public. DOLWD employees may also access the DEI webpage [Blueberry Intranet](#). The DEI public website provides readers with an overview of the DEI grant project and links to the staff assigned to the project. The DEI website provides an overview of the grant project and also provides information on the many components:

- Disability Resource Coordinators (state level and local);
- accessibility in Alaska's One Stops (physical accessibility and programmatic accessibility);
- assistive Technologies in Alaska's One Stops;
- Ticket to Work/Employment Networks that serve job seekers who are receiving Social Security disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Customized /Self Employment, Partnerships /Collaboration; and
- asset Building.

In addition to the DEI websites, marketing materials (e.g. brochures and posters) have been developed and distributed to Employment Network sites. Direct marketing techniques (e.g. letters and phone calls) are being applied to SSDI and SSI beneficiaries to provide a more effective customer focused approach.

For more information regarding marketing for the DEI grant, you can contact the State Project Lead, Louise Dean at (907) 269-7487 or via email at louise.dean@alaska.gov.

Best Beginnings: Building a Strong Workforce from the Ground Up

Patty Ginsburg for Best Beginnings

In today's world, the ability to analyze a problem, cope with challenges, and work well with others are among the most important attributes for success in work and success in life. Those skills – along with many others – are first learned in the earliest years of life when the baby brain is developing the infrastructure on which all future learning will build.

Because these skills start early, the key to a strong work force is also to start early. Best Beginnings mobilizes people and resources to ensure all Alaska children begin school ready to succeed.

When children are prepared for school they are far more likely as adults to have the skills employers need, contribute to a thriving economy, and provide the highly trained work force essential to compete in the global economy. Yet too many Alaska children enter school unprepared. As a society, we pay the price when children aren't prepared – that's why early learning is everybody's business.

Visit our website www.BestBeginningsAlaska.org for ways you can join with us to build Alaska's future work force. For more information about national efforts of business leaders in support of early childhood policies that strengthen our economy and work force, check out www.ReadyNation.org.



Alaska CTE: Educator Innovation and Student Determination

Michele Mussman, Statewide Tech Prep Specialist



Annie Hopper and her team at the University of Alaska Fairbanks College of Rural and Community Development (UAF-CRCD) have developed and are facilitating an eLearning Health Academy for Interior Alaska high school students. In addition to participating in distance-delivered UAF college courses in their villages, the students were given an opportunity to come to UAF to participate in a university level course, "HLTH 110- Professional Skills for the Workplace", and meet their distance delivery course instructor face to face, practice using distance delivery technology at the UAF Center for Distance Education, and tour the University of Fairbanks campus.

Would students from rural Alaska want to participate in an eLearning Health Academy?

Twenty-four high school students signed up to participate in this pilot of the eLearning Health Academy. Students came from four different school districts from the Interior, the Northwest and the Kuskokwim regions of Alaska. Twenty-three students finally made it from their villages to Fairbanks in order to participate in this pilot. In addition to the usual challenges students face in completing the university registration process, rural students face additional obstacles. Two of these rural Alaskan students went to extraordinary measures to participate in this Health eLearning Academy. Their stories are not only representations of the Alaskan way of life when meeting the challenges of life in the Bush, but are also examples of the power of high school students who have determined their future goals, and are determined to achieve them regardless of the barriers placed in front of them.

Story 1:

A young female student traveled from her village to spend the winter holiday with her grandparents in another village. Due to the Alaskan winter weather and lack of fuel, she was unable to fly back to her home village in time to participate in the Academy. This student talked her uncle into driving her ninety miles on the back seat of a snow machine in sub-zero temperature to make a pick-up point where a plane could transport her to Fairbanks. The seventeen year old experienced frostbite on her cheeks and under her chin during the trip, but didn't inform the academy team until the next morning at breakfast, whereupon she was taken to the hospital to make sure that she would heal safely. After treatment, the student reunited with her other course mates and continued to participate in the Academy. She was eager to participate and will continue to pursue her career goals despite the obstacles she may encounter.

Story 2:

This student had already taken several health science courses in high school, and has already applied and been accepted to the University of Alaska Fairbanks next year. She was not able to catch a flight to Fairbanks from her village due to cold temperatures; i.e. small planes do not fly when the temperature drops lower than 40 degrees below zero. Her determination to attend the academy led her to find a spot down river that was only -36°F. She then drove her snow machine 10 miles to the pick-up point so that she could catch a flight to Fairbanks. She participated in the Academy in the second session with her peers and is looking forward to next year at UAF preparing for a career in Health. She did end up staying an extra two and one-half days in Fairbanks because when the Academy was over, the temperatures in her village had dropped to -60°F.

Although many outsiders see Alaska as the end of the road, Alaskan students see their road to the future just beginning. It's just that in Alaska, sometimes you need to get over a couple of frost heaves to arrive at your destination.

WorkKeys Testing: Perceptions of Alaska High School Students

Deanna Schultz, UAA Assistant Professor, Career and Technical Education

Across the country, employers are calling for entry-level employees with basic academic skills and educators are being held accountable for student achievement in academic areas similar to those required by employers. In this environment, WorkKeys has emerged as a set of tests that could respond to the needs of both employers and educators and serve as an indicator to test takers of their readiness for a career or further education. Several states have policies regarding the statewide use of WorkKeys tests, including Alaska, and in the 2010-2011 academic year, all Alaska high school juniors took the WorkKeys Reading for Information, Locating Information, and Applied Mathematics tests. During this first year of statewide testing, a research study was conducted to describe the college and career readiness perceptions of high school juniors related to the WorkKeys tests, and to gather student perceptions of these tests in general. A survey was administered to 178 Anchorage high school juniors at the time they received their WorkKeys results.

There were **two key findings** of this study:

- 1) student perceptions of college and career readiness were much higher than the results of the tests indicated, and
- 2) students found value in using WorkKeys results for college and career planning. This suggested the test results would be useful in career development interventions with high school students.

This study looked at one area related to WorkKeys testing and further research is recommended to gather rural high school student perceptions, further explore factors that students believe make the tests useful, and determine the influence of the tests and related interventions on academic self-efficacy. For more information about this study, please contact Dr. Deanna Schultz, UAA Assistant Professor of Career & Technical Education, at 907-786-6364 or ddschultz@uaa.alaska.edu.